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TOWN OF BELMONT

ZONING BOARD OF APPEAL

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Belmont High School  
Tuesday, October 8, 1996  
Volume VII

\*\*\*\*\*COMPUTER-AIDED\*TRANSCRIPTION\*\*\*\*\*

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14                   MITT ROMNEY: Hi, I'm Mitt Romney. I  
15 live in Belmont.

16                   I stand, and I'd also speak in favor  
17 of a tall steeple, steeples for my church, and in  
18 the future I'm going to stand in this room for any  
19 steeple of any church that wants to be built in  
20 this Town, because I believe this Town and this  
21 State, this Commonwealth, and this nation needs  
22 more steeples, not less steeples, pointing  
23 symbolically to heaven, where I think the source  
24 of our blessings and the source of many of our

1        questions come from.

2                Now, last week some of us put an ad in  
3        the Belmont Citizen Herald, and we displayed six  
4        other steeples there. They're taller in height  
5        than the one that's shown here or about the same  
6        size. Some were a little smaller. Some were  
7        taller. Those I find out in my driving around are  
8        not particularly hard to find.

9                I drove last week into work through  
10       the Mass. Pike, and I left my area, and I started  
11       driving, and I came to Plymouth Congregational  
12       Church. It's a relatively modest 90 foot high  
13       steeple. Then I went into Watertown, and I came  
14       to Phillips Congregational Church. It's about  
15       120 feet the way I tried to calculate it visually,  
16       and then I came across several churches that are  
17       built on the top of very tall hills, mountains  
18       almost. One of them was the Perkins Chapel in  
19       Watertown. That has a 171 foot high steeple.  
20       Then I saw the United Church of Christ in Newton,  
21       a 160 foot steeple. That's my estimate. Then my  
22       favorite which is the Trinity Catholic Church in  
23       Newton, 190 foot high steeple, lit beautifully in  
24       the evening if you drive along the Pike on that



1     hill there.

2                 Now, some of us assert that these  
3     steeple's aren't relevant, because they were built  
4     before Zoning Laws, and they're not in Belmont in  
5     some cases. They're grandfathered. Modern zoning  
6     they'd argue is designed to protect us against  
7     things like that. In my view that's wrong.  
8     Modern zoning is not designed to protect us from  
9     steeple's. As a matter of fact, steeple's are what  
10    make our communities beautiful and neighborly, and  
11    they remind us of the things that are most  
12    important to us. I can't imagine anyone thinks a  
13    picturesque view of New England towns would be  
14    more lovely if all the steeple's were lopped off at  
15    the same height as chimneys.

16                Steeple's all around us are relevant in  
17    my view. From the Nation's Founding Fathers to  
18    the people who wrote our State Constitution to the  
19    people who reiterated that in the Dover Amendment,  
20    we are reminded that steeple's stand above Town  
21    boundaries and Town zoning. The test of a  
22    steeple's reasonableness, I would say, is not  
23    bound by neighborhood or town boundary or zoning,  
24    because it is a religious purpose, which is being

1 protected without restrictive boundary, because  
2 religious purposes provide us with purpose, peace,  
3 and perspective.

4 In my view, the notion should be  
5 rejected that steeples on a house of God can stand  
6 no taller than chimneys on the house of a man.

7 (Applause.)

8 MITT ROMNEY: Now, as I've been across  
9 Belmont, and as I've driven across Massachusetts,  
10 and throughout Boston, I see that tall steeples  
11 stand above our homes and businesses everywhere.  
12 In my view they remind us that we were brought  
13 here and preserved in this land by province.

14 They typify our diversity representing  
15 a host of faiths and a host of people. To some  
16 they're like guideposts standing for constant  
17 answers in a changing and troubling world. As  
18 graffiti begins to corrupt our edifices, even in  
19 Belmont, I've noticed, I celebrate this physical  
20 witness of God's hand open to all his children.

21 I want more steeples. I'm not  
22 concerned with the faith they represent.  
23 Belmont's a Town of diversity and acceptance.  
24 Each church and synagogue in my view is a



1     testament of our appreciation for our differences  
2     in some things, but our unity in the recognition  
3     of the family of mankind.

4             When our church was burned a few years  
5     ago or several years ago, the Armenian Protestants  
6     and the Catholics and the Congregationalists  
7     invited us into their sanctuaries to use their  
8     meetinghouse, which we did for a number of months,  
9     and when Armenia was rocked by earthquake, a  
10    friend of mine, a prominent member of our faith  
11    contributed to build a cement factory in Armenia  
12    that would go on to build 100,000 homes.

13            Nothing has brought home more the fact  
14    that acts of love go across boundary of faith and  
15    culture and even nation then the fact that I just  
16    recently got a letter -- or read the letter in the  
17    Belmont Citizen Herald from the local ministers in  
18    this community supporting the building of this  
19    temple.

20            I submit to the Board that these  
21    steeple are reasonable. They're reasonable in  
22    relationship to the other magnificent steeples in  
23    our greater community and reasonable in the light  
24    of he who they are designed and dedicated to help

1 us remember, and I respectfully petition the Board  
2 to approve the steeples of my temple as it has  
3 churches in the past, and I hope it will do, and  
4 I will fight to do for other churches of other  
5 faiths in the future.

6 Thank you.

7 (Applause.)

